

WATER OPERATOR NEWS

December 2002

Are You In Compliance With the Water Operator Rules?

WHEN THE NEW OPERATOR CERTIFICATION RULES went into effect in February 2001, a two-year period was granted for water systems to obtain a certified operator. The **February 2003 deadline** is fast approaching and water systems can gain compliance to the rule in several ways:

- Water systems may comply by hiring a contract operator or "regional operator." This would be by hiring operators from other systems or an already certified operator to run the system.
- Water systems may comply by having their operator take an exam.
- Water systems may comply by applying for a grandparent certificate that is site specific. To qualify for a grandparent certificate the operator must meet tenure requirements, and the water system must have a good compliance history. A system that serves a population from 25 to 800 that wants to grandparent their operators must be a community or nontransient noncommunity system.

Noncompliance with the operator certification rules can result in enforcement action from the Drinking Water Board. See the rules below.

STATE OF UTAH PUBLIC DRINKING WATER RULES

R309-105-11. Operator Certification.

All community and nontransient noncommunity water systems or any public system that employs treatment techniques for surface water or ground water under the direct influence of surface water shall have an appropriately certified operator in accordance with the requirements of these rules. Refer to Section R309-300, Certification Rules for Water Supply Operators, for specific requirements.

R309-300-18. Noncompliance With Certification Program.

1) After appropriate consideration by the Operator Certification Commission, cases of noncompliance will be referred to the Drinking Water Board for appropriate enforcement action.

2) Noncompliance with the certification rules is a violation of Section R309-105-11. Whenever such a violation occurs, the water system management will be notified in writing by the Division of Drinking Water and will be required to correct the situation.

If you have questions or concerns, please call Kim Dyches at (801) 536-4202 or Margaret Hand at (801) 536-4192. ?

Certification Exams Scheduled for February 28 and April 11, 2003

ATTENTION ALL WATER SYSTEM operators and managers, and anyone seeking employment in the water industry. The Division of Drinking Water (DDW) is offering water operator certification exams for distribution and treatment systems. All grade levels, including small systems, will be offered on **February 28, 2003**, and **April 11, 2003**.

The **February 28, 2003** exam will be held in St. George in conjunction with the Rural Water Association of Utah (RWAU) annual conference scheduled February 25-28, 2003. To help prepare applicants for the certification exam, RWAU has included operator certification training in their conference program. RWAU staff members will proctor the exam on Friday morning, February 28th. (See "RWAU Conference Preview" on the last page)

To operators preparing for the exam: Although the RWAU is offering all grade levels of exams, the training is specifically directed toward small systems and grade level one. Because of the wide range of knowledge needed for all exams, you should come to the conference prepared to take the exam. The training will be beneficial to everyone, but should be used more as a refresher course for your pre-study preparation.

The **April 11, 2003** exam will be offered at 16 locations throughout the state (see exam application for list of cities). The exam will begin at 9:00 a.m. at all locations. You will be given three hours to take the exam. The certification exam will consist of 100 multiple-choice questions covering safety, math, chlorination, state rules, pumps and pumping, and operation and maintenance. A minimum score of 70% is needed to pass the exam.

How to register for an exam . . .

Fill out the exam application completely and mail it, along with the appropriate fee, to: Division of Drinking Water, Operator Certification Program, 150 North 1950 West, P.O. Box 144830, Salt Lake City, Utah 84114-4830. Make the check or money order payable to the "Division of Drinking Water."

Record Application Fee (for first-time applicants who have never
before taken an exam) . . . \$20.00
Examination Fee \$50.00

Note: If you have taken an operator exam before, you need only pay the \$50.00 exam fee.

The exam application and fee must arrive at the Division of Drinking Water office on or before the deadline listed. **Applications and fees received after the deadline will not be accepted.** A letter confirming your exam reservation will be mailed or faxed to you.

Exam Cancellation Policy: Only one cancellation, per applicant, is allowed. An applicant making a written or phone-in cancellation by 9:00 a.m. on the day of the exam may request a refund of the exam fee or take the next scheduled exam. If the applicant should also cancel the next scheduled exam, the exam fee will be forfeited.

An official exam application is enclosed with this announcement. The application may be photocopied. For more information or to request an exam application, contact the Division of Drinking Water's Operator Certification Program by telephone (801) 536-4200, by E-mail: *mhand@utah.gov*, or visit the Division of Drinking Water office at 150 North 1950 West, 2nd floor, Salt Lake City, Utah.

Operator Certification Exam Schedule

	Exam date: February 28, 2003 Exam time: 9:00 a.m. Exam application deadline: February 14, 2003	Exam date: April 11, 2003 Exam time: 9:00 a.m. Exam application deadline: March 21, 2003
Exam Location	The Dixie Center (Ballroom AB) 1835 Convention Center Drive St. George, Utah	16 locations in Utah. See exam application for list of cities.
Exams Offered	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small System • Distribution (Grades I thru IV) • Treatment (Grades I thru IV) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small System • Distribution (Grades I thru IV) • Treatment (Grades I thru IV)
Sponsor Information	<p>To register for the training conference, send registration form and fee to:</p> <p>Rural Water Association of Utah 76 E. Red Pine Drive Alpine, Utah 84004 Telephone: (801) 756-5123 Fax: 801-756-5036 E-mail: smcomber@rwau.net</p> <p>To apply for the exam, send application and fee to:</p> <p>Division of Drinking Water Operator Certification Program 150 North 1950 West - PO Box 144830 Salt Lake City, Utah 84114-4830 Telephone: (801) 536-4200 or 536-4192 Fax: (801) 536-4211 E-mail: mhand@utah.gov</p>	<p>To apply for the exam, send application and fee to:</p> <p>Division of Drinking Water Operator Certification Program 150 North 1950 West - PO Box 144830 Salt Lake City, Utah 84114-4830 Telephone: (801) 536-4200 or 536-4192 Fax: 801-536-4211 E-mail: mhand@utah.gov</p>

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How to Become a Certified Water Operator

IF YOU ARE AN INDIVIDUAL looking for employment within the drinking water industry in Utah, or if you are interested in becoming a “water specialist,” you may apply for certification.

The only way to become certified is by taking a written examination; be certified as an operator in another state and applying for reciprocity; or by having your water system apply for a grandparent certificate between February 1, 2001, and February 1, 2003.

Certification is divided into two disciplines: Distribution and Treatment. There are five grade levels within the distribution discipline: Small System and grades I thru IV. There are four grade levels within the treatment discipline: Grades I thru IV.

Detailed Breakdown of Exam Subject Coverage - The exams offered in water treatment and distribution can be categorized according to the level of ability and competency of the operator expected to take these exams. Any operator who makes independent decisions that affect the sanitary quality, safety, and adequacy of the water to their system will need to be certified to the grade of the system.

Small System - This level is for persons running a very small system with a population of 25-500. These community or non-transient non-community systems are usually run by a volunteer or elected official.

Grade I - This level is for persons running small systems or slow-sand filter, reverse osmosis, or similar types of small treatment facilities*. The operator at this level in a larger system will generally be closely supervised.

Grade II - This level is for persons running a system between 1,500 and 5,000 population or small package-type treatment plants*. This corresponds to a “lead” level position. Through experience and education, the operator has demonstrated himself independently competent in most basic tasks.

Grade III - This level is for persons running a system between 5,000 and 20,000 population or medium size treatment plants*. This corresponds to a “journeyman” level position and the person generally supervised and instructs others. They can, without direct supervision, operate and maintain all but the most complex systems.

Grade IV - This level is for persons running a system serving over 20,000 population or large treatment plants or plants with complex operational processes.* This level corresponds to the highest level currently available under the Utah program. It identifies that the person has demonstrated knowledge of the most complex portions of water system operation. The Grade IV operator routinely supervises work crews or groups of work crews. Budget preparation is frequently a duty. It is assumed that a person certified at this level has enough experience and education to operate any other water system serving more than 20,000 people, in compliance with the Utah Public Drinking Water Rules and laws of the state of Utah. ?

**Treatment plants are rated on population served, degree of treatment, and complexity of operational processes.*

CEUs and the Certification Renewal Process

ONCE AN INDIVIDUAL IS CERTIFIED, his/her certificate is valid for a full three-year period. During that period, the individual must earn a sufficient amount of continuing education units (CEUs) to be able to renew that certificate at the end of the three-year period.

The Utah Operator Certification Program rules define a CEU (continuing education unit) as “ten contact hours of participation in, and successful completion of an organized and approved continuing education experience with responsible sponsorship, capable direction, and qualified instruction.”

To ensure that certified operators remain abreast of the technological advances within the water industry, CEUs are required for renewal of all certificates, including grandparent certificates. The Operator Certification Rules specify the number of CEUs required per grade for renewal:

<u>Level of Certification</u>	<u>CEUs required in a 3-year period</u>
Small System	2.0
Grades I and II	2.0
Grades III and IV	3.0

CEUs can be acquired by attending pre-approved workshops, seminars, conferences, etc., which have been designed to keep the operator up-to-date on water supply practices as well as all new changes within the rules and industry standards.

The Division of Drinking Water database tracks the number of CEUs an operator accrues during the three-year period of certification. **If the operator is lacking the required number of CEUs**, a letter is mailed to the home address at least four months prior to the expiration date. **An operator who has earned a sufficient amount of CEUs** will receive a renewal application at least two months prior to the expiration date. ?

RWAU Conference Preview

HERE IS A PREVIEW of the Rural Water Association of Utah 2003 annual conference. The conference will be held at the Dixie Center in St. George, Utah.

Operator pre-certification training is included in the conference schedule. Note to operators preparing for the exam: Because of the wide range of knowledge needed for all exams, you should come to the conference prepared to take the exam. The training will be beneficial to everyone, but should be used more as a refresher course for your pre-study preparation.

Certified operators who attend the three-day conference (February 26-28) will earn 1.0 CEUs. Operators who attend the pre-conference training as well as the regular conference (February 25-28) will earn a total of 1.6 CEUs.

For more information about the conference, contact:
Rural Water Association of Utah

76 E. Red Pine Drive
Alpine, Utah 84004
Telephone: (801) 756-5123
Fax: 801-756-5036
E-mail: smcomber@rwau.net

RWAU CONFERENCE PREVIEW

Tuesday, February 25, 2003

Pre-Conference Training and Golf Scramble

- 7:30 a.m. Registration
- 8:00 a.m. Continental Breakfast
- 8:30 a.m. Training
- 9:30 a.m. Golf Scramble
- 11:45 a.m. Luncheon
- 1:00 p.m. Training
- 7:00 p.m. Meet and Greet Social

Wednesday, February 26, 2003

Conference

- 7:30 a.m. Registration
- 8:00 a.m. Exhibits/Continental Breakfast
- 9:00 a.m. Training
- 11:30 a.m. Luncheon
- 12:30 p.m. Door Prize Drawing
- 1:00 p.m. General Session
- 3:00 p.m. Training
- 7:00 p.m. Awards Banquet

Thursday, February 27, 2003

Conference

- 7:30 a.m. Registration
- 8:00 a.m. Exhibits/Continental Breakfast
- 8:45 a.m. Partners Tour
- 9:00 a.m. Training
- 10:30 a.m. Voting Membership Meeting/
Water Taste Contest
- 12:00 p.m. Luncheon/Exhibits
- 1:00 p.m. Door Prize Drawing
- 2:00 p.m. Training

Friday, February 28, 2003

Conference

- 7:30 a.m. Registration
- 8:00 a.m. Continental Breakfast
- 8:30 a.m. Training
- 8:30 a.m. Partners Session/Door Prizes
- 9:00 a.m. Operator Certification Examination
- 12:00 p.m. Door Prize Drawing/Raffle Drawing
- 1:30 p.m. Drinking Water Board Meeting

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